

Memorial Hill Receiving Much Needed Facelift

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by Josh Jones

Four years ago an ambitious program started, the Memorial Hill Rejuvenation Project. Since that time several Wasatch County citizens have dedicated hundreds of hours to the task of returning Memorial Hill to its original beauty, including replacing the plaques honoring Wasatch County Veterans.

The project to get Memorial Hill's plaques made again was started by Heber resident Dr. Robert Greene. The plaques, which were originally brass, were stolen about ten years ago. After the plaques were stolen, vandalism became prevalent on the hill. Since then, Memorial Hill has had a bad name because of alleged drug dealing, and being a place where wild parties were all too common.

After Greene went on a mission for the LDS church, Midway resident Al Kohler took charge of the project. Kohler, who has put in hundreds of man hours, is trying to get people excited about the project. He is also trying to get businesses to donate services and goods. The task has been large, but Kohler has managed to get a group of concerned citizens who care enough about the hill to donate time, service and even

supplies. The people who are excited about the project range from large companies and local businesses, to ordinary citizens who simply want to help out the community.

Kohler has set the task far above just getting the plaques back on the wall, he also wants to plant trees and shrubs. He would like to see a pipe system carry water up to the top for drinking water, and also to water the newly planted trees and bushes. Rocks will also be placed around the top parking lot in order to prevent automobiles from rolling off of the hill, which Kohler said has happened in the past.

But the endeavor does not end there, Kohler is putting a new flag at the top of the pole and Heber light and power is going to check the lighting system. To top off the project, a new entrance and a new arch will be put at the bottom of the hill.

As one can see, Kohler has set a large goal for not only himself, he hopes the whole community will get involved. It is surprising how much Kohler and Greene have accomplished in the short time they have been at this project.

After the original brass plates were stolen there was no record of the veterans who were named on



Al Kohler hopes to restore Memorial Hill.

the plates. Through hundreds of hours, Greene has researched literally thousands of names in order to hopefully get every veteran who was once honored on the plates back onto the hill where this time, Kohler says, they will not be stolen again. The plates will be made out of a brass colored advanced plastic. After the new plates are molded, they will be set in place on Memorial Hill, and have bulletproof glass cover over them. Not only has Greene spent hours researching

the old plaques, he has also had to research each name for the correct spelling.

Kohler has also been hard at work. Recently he received several tons of huge pot rocks from Meg Byer, who had originally sold the rocks to a contractor but decided to donate the rocks to Wasatch county. The rocks will be used to circle the parking lot at the top of the hill.

Kohler is also in the process of receiving a donation from Mountain Fuel of more than one mile of pipe, to go up the Hill and water the plants. Several contractors have said they would be willing to build trenches around the side of the mountain in order to get the pipe up the hill. Kohler himself is also contributing to the project by making a huge new archway that will welcome visitors as they enter at the bottom of the hill.

"The more people get involved, the more people will appreciate Memorial Hill," said Kohler, who is trying to get as many people excited about the project as he can. Kohler is also going to ask people who live around the entrance, and the Sheriff's Department, to lock the gate at night to prevent any more vandalism from occurring.

However, Kohler realizes that,

"Just like everything else in life, there is a price tag, we have to decide whether this is worth doing." Hidden cost, such as maintenance and clean-up after the inevitable vandalism will creep in, but Kohler hopes that the Hill will continue to have the support it does now, to ensure that the Memorial will stay in peak condition.

"We are lucky to have a hill like this, it is beautiful from up here, when you come up here you get a great view of the valley," said Kohler. As if the project itself is not enough, Kohler has added to his goal by trying to get the bulk of the project done by the end of summer.

Memorial Hill is a part of Wasatch County's heritage, says Kohler, Indians used to use the unusual hill as a lookout point. Legends, such as Indians being buried around the hill, and even a chief who was buried directly under the flag pole still exist. Memorial Hill is indeed part of the area's heritage and culture. Greene and Kohler are preserving the county's rich history, which will be permanently on display for people when they travel the mile up the Hill.

If you would like to help Al Kohler with materials or with service, call him at 654-2580.

